

share this same dedication to fully funding veterans programs. In fact, the Republicans recently passed a 5-year budget that cuts veteran health care by \$6 billion, even as hundreds of thousands of new veterans return from Iraq and Afghanistan in need of VA care. They yell "support our troops, support our troops," but these returning men and women will have to wait almost a year for some appointments.

Mr. Speaker, the brave men and women who risk their lives in our Armed Forces deserve more than just our respect. They also deserve the quality health care we promised them when they enlisted.

#### TAX RELIEF LEGISLATION PROVIDING RELIEF TO AMERICANS

(Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Florida once again led the Nation in job growth during the past year with 261,000 new jobs. To continue this growth, Mr. Speaker, in Florida and the rest of the country, this Republican Congress passed a tax relief bill which ensures millions of American families, small businesses and seniors will continue to enjoy relief from budget-busting, economy-killing tax increases.

Yet despite our sustained economic success and the shrinking deficits, Democrat leadership continues to endorse policies that would slam the brakes on our economic success and our remarkable job growth. Just last week, Mr. Speaker, House Democrats, like the minority leader and the ranking Democrat member of the Ways and Means Committee, voted for a massive tax hike on hard-working Americans, more than half a trillion dollars in increased taxes over the next 5 years, or enough to pay for all the expenditures of all the governments of the Western Hemisphere combined for an entire year.

The American people, Mr. Speaker, want and deserve a fiscally responsive government, not the burdensome tax burden one that the Democrats continue to vote for.

#### STEM CELL RESEARCH: IT'S TIME FOR THE SENATE TO ACT

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, today marks the one year anniversary of the House passage of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act. By a vote of 298-134, the House overwhelmingly approved the stem cell bill, which would expand the Federal Government's investment in vital promising research.

Embryonic stem cells hold the key to the treatment of diseases like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, ALS and many

other currently incurable diseases. An overwhelming majority of Americans support this research.

This is not a traditional Democrat versus Republican issue, it is about a right versus a wrong. Yet a year after House action, America is still waiting on the Senate.

Two weeks ago, the Senate held its "Health Week," a series of votes, but the Republican leadership refused to take a vote on stem cell research that would have saved lives in the area we are talking about. Health Week in the Senate will be known from now on as the "Hoax Week."

When the Senate majority leader refused to hold a vote, despite his past public support, the majority leader showed America his priorities, and I am afraid it has little to do with funding treatments for incurable diseases.

Mr. Speaker, if the majority leader is as committed to stem cell research as he says, then it is time for an up or down vote on this important research that will save many lives, and then the Senate will earn the title "Health Week" back again.

#### RENEWING THE AMERICAN DREAM: THE REAL RATIONAL MIDDLE GROUND ON IMMIGRATION REFORM

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, one week ago President Bush set out his views on immigration reform to the American people. He stated, "There is a rational middle ground between granting an automatic path to citizenship for every illegal immigrant and a program of mass deportation."

I agree with the President that there is a rational middle ground that can be found between amnesty and mass deportation, but amnesty is not that middle ground.

Today at the Heritage Foundation, here in Washington, DC, I will unveil the real rational middle ground on immigration reform. I call it the Border Integrity and Immigration Reform Act. It sees the solution to this crisis as a four-step process. First, secure the border. The second step is to make the decision once and for all to deny amnesty to people whose first act in the United States was a violation of the law. Third, is to put in place a guest worker program without amnesty that will efficiently provide American employers with willing guest workers who come into America legally. The final step is tough employer sanctions that ensure a full partnership between American business and the American government in the enforcement of our laws on immigration.

There is a real rational middle ground on immigration reform, and I hope and humbly submit the Border Integrity and Immigration Reform Act might just be it.

#### WAR WITH IRAN NOT INEVITABLE

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, war with Iran is not inevitable if the U.S. is ready to lead the way with honest, patient negotiations. However, this administration seems intent on war with Iran. The administration is ignoring any diplomatic initiatives which could set the stage for talks to end the confrontation and the escalation.

The administration is seeking to isolate Iran from the international community and threatens to punish nations which try to intervene to end the crisis. The administration is ratcheting up fears in Europe over a first strike nuclear capability, which Iran does not have.

Dozens of Members of Congress have now signed a letter to the President urging the United States to open up talks with Iran. Foreign policy experts such as Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Madeleine Albright are urging negotiations.

President Kennedy once said in his inaugural, "We should not negotiate out of fear, but we should never fear to negotiate." We must make a new beginning and begin talks with Iran. War is not inevitable. Peace is inevitable, if we are ready to work for it.

#### DEMOCRAT PLAN TO ACHIEVE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, when I return to my home district, where the price of regular gas has topped \$3 a gallon at many service stations, I hear constituents tell me loud and clear that they believe that the Republican majority in Congress has led this country in a drastically wrong direction.

Unfortunately, from the very beginning, the Bush administration has excluded the concerns of ordinary Americans from their energy policy debates. In fact, the secretive energy task force, headed by Vice President CHENEY, deliberated behind closed doors, and, as a result, billions of dollars in subsidies were provided to big oil interests.

Last fall, the Republican House rubber stamped an energy bill that even President Bush's own Energy Department predicted would raise gas prices. Almost 1 year later, the price of gas at the pump has skyrocketed. In fact, Americans are now paying an incredible 100 percent more for gas than they were when President Bush took office. Meanwhile, the incomes of middle income families have fallen every year.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that we turn out those who have given us this flawed policy.